

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend claims 1-5, 8, 40, 45, 69, 73, 75, and 79 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A process for the manufacture of mouldings that are crosslinked in a mould at least to a degree sufficient to be released from the mold, comprising the steps of:

obtaining a mould, wherein the mould comprises a first mould half having a first mould surface, a second mould half having a second mould surface, and at least one mask, wherein the first and second mould surfaces together define a mould cavity, wherein at least one of the first and second mould surfaces is permeable to an energy suitable to cause the crosslinking of a starting crosslinkable material, wherein the mask is associated with one of the first and second mould halves having an energy-permeable mould surface and is impermeable or at least of poor permeability compared with the permeability of the energy-permeable mould surface, wherein the mask extends inwardly right up to the mould cavity and surrounds the mould cavity so as to screen all areas behind the mask with the exception of the mould cavity;

~~introducing a the starting crosslinkable material that is in a state in which it is at least partially uncrosslinked into the mould, wherein the mould is at least partially permeable to an energy suitable to cause the crosslinking of the starting crosslinkable material and comprises a first mould half having a first mould surface and a second mould half having a second mould surface, wherein the first and second mould surfaces together define a mould cavity;~~

providing the energy that is in the form of a substantially parallel beam; and

irradiating with the energy the mould containing the starting material from the mould half having the mask associated therewith so as to spatially restrict impingement of the energy to an energy-impinging region, wherein the energy-impinging region is defined by combination of the first and second mould surfaces and an imaginary wall extending between the first and second mould surfaces and surrounding the mould cavity, wherein the imaginary wall is formed by transferring the boundary contour with the mould cavity of the mask in a two-dimensionally parallel and downwards manner from one mould surface to the other mould surface; and

~~crosslinking, under spatially restricting impingement of the energy to the mould cavity in an energy-impinging region covering the center of the mould cavity and having a non-adjustable peripheral boundary defined by the spatial restriction of the energy impingement, thereby causing essentially only the starting crosslinkable material disposed in located inside the energy-impinging region of the mould cavity to be crosslinked all together to form a moulding having a first surface, an opposite second surface and an edge~~

a clean and burr-free moulding rim which does not require any

subsequent mechanical processing, wherein the first surface is defined by the first mould surface, the second surface is defined by the second mould surface, and at least partial areas the edge of the moulding rim are ~~is~~ defined by the imaginary wall which is defined by the boundary contour of the mask with the mould cavity ~~non-adjustable peripheral boundary of the energy impinging region defined by the spatial restriction of the energy impingement, and wherein the produced moulding is free from burrs or flashes.~~

2. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the mask is fixed, constructed or arranged in, at or on the mould half having an energy-permeable mould surface ~~spatial restriction of the energy impingement is effected by masking of the mould, the masking being at least partially impermeable to the energy.~~

3. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the energy employed to cause the crosslinking is a radiation energy.

4. (currently amended) A process according to claim 3, wherein the radiation energy is a UV light ~~in the form of a substantially parallel beam.~~

5. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the first mould surface of the first mould half used is one that is highly permeable ~~at least at one side~~ to the energy, and wherein the mask comprises ~~the spatial restriction of the energy impingement is effected by~~ parts of the mould that are impermeable or of poor permeability to the energy.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the mould is not fully closed after the introduction of the starting material into the mould cavity, so that at least a gap containing excess starting material remains open, which gap is in communication with and surrounds the mould cavity and ~~preferably surrounds it, and wherein the gap and the energy is kept away from~~ the excess starting material disposed in ~~that~~ the gap is located behind the mask and screened from irradiation of the energy.

9. (previously presented) A process according to claim 8, wherein the mould is closed further following crosslinking shrinkage as crosslinking of the starting crosslinkable material progresses.

10. (previously presented) A process according to claim 8, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a flowable liquid, and wherein a reservoir that is not impinged upon by the energy is provided from which the starting crosslinkable material can flow back through the gap into the mould cavity to compensate for shrinkage.

11. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein, after the moulding has been released from the mould, any uncrosslinked or only partially crosslinked material adhering to the moulding is removed by washing with a suitable solvent.

12. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the mould is closed without force, so that the two mould halves lie against one another without external pressure.

13. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the filling of the mould cavity is carried out with the mold at least partially immersed in the starting crosslinkable material that is at least partially still in the uncrosslinked state.

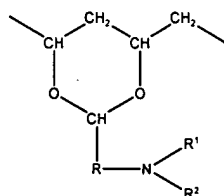
14. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein, for filling the mould cavity, the cavity is connected to a reservoir which surrounds it, in which the starting crosslinkable material is stored and from which the mould cavity is flooded.

15. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein the mould is closed in the starting crosslinkable material.

16. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein the mould is used that comprises a container and a mould member that is displaceable in that container and can be moved away from and towards the container wall lying opposite it for the purpose of opening and closing the mould, the starting crosslinkable material being fed in between the container wall and the mould member as the mould is opened and conveyed away again as the mould is closed.

17. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein one of the first and second mould halves is provided on the container wall and the other mould half is provided on the displaceable mould member.
18. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17, wherein the first mould half is a male mould half and the second mould half is a female mould half, the male mould half being provided on the container wall and the female mould half being provided on the displaceable mould member.
19. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein pumps are used to feed in and convey away the starting crosslinkable material.
20. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the displaceable mould member is driven in order to feed in and convey away the starting crosslinkable material.
21. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein the crosslinked moulding can be released from the mould by flushing out the mould with the starting crosslinkable material.
22. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the crosslinked moulding can be released from the mould by flushing out the mould with the starting crosslinkable material, and wherein the moulding is separated from the mould by the flow of the starting crosslinkable material as the mould is opened and is flushed out of the mould by the flow of the starting crosslinkable material as the mould is closed.
23. (previously presented) A process according to claim 21, wherein in a first cycle the mould is opened and closed again, then at least the crosslinking necessary for it to be possible for the moulding to be released from the mould is effected by the impingement of energy and, in a second cycle, the mould is opened again, the moulding being separated from the mould and the displaceable mould member then being moved back towards the opposite-lying container wall again in order to close the mould, in the course of which the crosslinked moulding is flushed out of the mould.
24. (original) A process according to claim 13, wherein the crosslinked moulding is removed from the mould by means of a gripping device.

25. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the crosslinked moulding is removed from the mould by means of a gripping device, and wherein the moulding removed from the mould by the gripping device is deposited on the displaceable mould member outside the space between the displaceable mould member and the opposite-lying wall.
26. (original) A process according to claim 25, wherein the moulding deposited on the displaceable mould member is held fast thereto by negative pressure and then released from it by positive pressure.
27. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein the mould is not fully closed after the introduction of the starting crosslinkable material into the mould cavity, so that an annular gap containing excess starting crosslinkable material remains open, which gap surrounds the mould cavity and is in communication with that mould cavity.
28. (previously presented) A process according to claim 27, wherein the mould is closed further following crosslinking shrinkage as crosslinking of the starting crosslinkable material progresses.
29. (previously presented) A process according to claim 28, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a flowable liquid, and wherein the excess starting crosslinkable material can flow back through the annular gap into the mould cavity to compensate for shrinkage.
30. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer that is a derivative of a polyvinyl alcohol having a molecular weight of at least about 2000 that, based on the number of hydroxy groups of the polyvinyl alcohol, comprises from approximately 0.5 to approximately 80 % of units of formula I



(I)

wherein

R is lower alkylene having up to 8 carbon atoms,

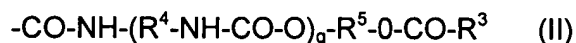
R^1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl and

R^2 is an olefinically unsaturated, electron-withdrawing, copolymerisable radical preferably having up to 25 carbon atoms.

31. (previously presented) A process according to claim 30, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein R^2 is an olefinically unsaturated acyl radical of formula R^3 -CO-, in which R^3 is an olefinically unsaturated copolymerisable radical having from 2 to 24 carbon atoms.

32. (previously presented) A process according to claim 31, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein R^3 is alkenyl having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms.

33. (previously presented) A process according to claim 30, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein the radical R^2 is a radical of formula II



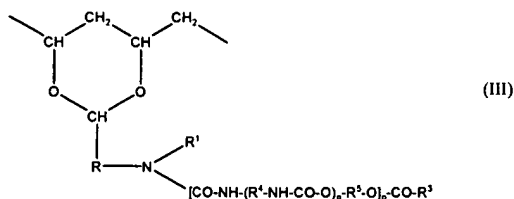
wherein

q is zero or one and

R^4 and R^5 are each independently lower alkylene having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms, arylene having from 6 to 12 carbon atoms, a saturated divalent cycloaliphatic group having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms, arylenealkylene or alkylenearylene having from 7 to 14 carbon atoms or arylenealkylenearylene having from 13 to 16 carbon atoms, and

R^3 is an olefinically unsaturated copolymerisable radical having from 2 to 24 carbon atoms.

34. (original) A process according to claim 30 wherein the prepolymer is a derivative of a polyvinyl alcohol having a molecular weight of at least about 2000 that, based on the number of hydroxy groups of the polyvinyl alcohol, comprises from approximately 0.5 to approximately 80 % of units of formula III



wherein

R is lower alkylene,

R¹ is hydrogen or lower alkyl,

p is zero or one,

q is zero or one,

R³ is an olefinically unsaturated copolymerisable radical having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms and

R⁴ and R⁵ are each independently lower alkylene having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms,

arylene having from 6 to 12 carbon atoms, a saturated divalent cycloaliphatic group having from 6 to 10 carbon atoms, arylenealkylene or alkylenearylene having from 7 to 14 carbon atoms or arylenealkylenearylene having from 13 to 16 carbon atoms.

35. (previously presented) A process according to claim 34, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein

R is lower alkylene having up to 6 carbon atoms,

p is zero and

R³ is alkenyl having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms.

36. (previously presented) A process according to claim 34, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein

R is lower alkylene having up to 6 carbon atoms, p is one,

q is zero,

R⁵ is lower alkylene having from 2 to 6 carbon atoms and

R³ is alkenyl having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms.

37. (previously presented) A process according to claim 34, wherein the starting crosslinkable material is a prepolymer wherein R is lower alkylene having up to 6 carbon atoms,

p is one,

q is one,

R⁴ is lower alkylene having from 2 to 6 carbon atoms, phenylene, unsubstituted or substituted by lower alkyl, cyclohexylene or cyclohexylene-lower alkylene, unsubstituted or substituted by lower alkyl, phenylene-lower alkylene, lower alkylene-phenylene or phenylene-lower alkylene-phenylene,

R⁵ is lower alkylene having from 2 to 6 carbon atoms and

R³ is alkenyl having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms.

38. (original) A process according to claim 30, wherein the starting material is a prepolymer that is a derivative of a polyvinyl alcohol having a molecular weight of at least about 2000 that, based on the number of hydroxy groups of the polyvinyl alcohol, comprises from approximately 1 to approximately 15 % of units of formula I.

39. (original) A process according to claim 1, wherein one half of the mould is used as packaging for the contact lens.

40 (currently amended) A device for the manufacture of mouldings, comprising:

a closable and openable mould, wherein the mould comprises a first mould half having a first mould surface and a second mould half having a second mould surface, wherein the first and second mould surfaces together define a mould cavity which can be filled with a starting crosslinkable material, wherein at least one of the first and second mould surfaces is at least partially permeable to an energy suitable to cause crosslinking of a crosslinkable material to be introduced into the mould;

a source providing the energy suitable to cause crosslinking of the crosslinkable material;
at least one mask associated with one of the first and second mould halves having an energy-permeable mould surface, wherein the mask is impermeable or at least of poor permeability compared with the permeability of the energy-permeable mould surface, wherein the mask extends inwardly right up to the mould cavity and surrounds the mould cavity so as to screen all areas behind the mask with the exception of the mould cavity, wherein the mask, under irradiation of the energy in a form of a substantially parallel beam, means for spatially restricts restricting impingement of the energy to the mould cavity in an energy-impinging region covering the center of the mould cavity and having a non-adjustable peripheral boundary defined by the spatial restriction of the energy impingement, thereby causing crosslinking essentially only the starting crosslinkable material disposed in located inside the energy-impinging region of the mould cavity to be crosslinked all together to form a moulding having a first surface, an opposite second surface and an edge a clean and burr-free moulding rim which does not require any subsequent mechanical processing, wherein the energy-impinging region is defined by combination of the first and second mould surfaces and an imaginary wall extending between the first and second mould surfaces and surrounding the mould cavity, wherein the imaginary wall is formed by transferring the boundary

contour with the mould cavity of the mask in a two-dimensionally parallel and downwards manner from one mould surface to the other mould surface, wherein the first surface is defined by the first mould surface, the second surface is defined by the second mould surface, and partial areas the edge of the moulding rim are is defined by the imaginary wall which is defined by the boundary contour of the mask with the mould cavity ~~non-adjustable peripheral boundary of the energy-impinging region defined by the spatial restriction of the energy impingement, and wherein the produced moulding is free from burrs or flashes.~~

41. (canceled)

42. (previously presented) A device according to claim 40, wherein the first and second mould halves are separated along a separating face, and wherein the mask is arranged outside the mould cavity on one of the two mould halves and/or on both mould halves in the region of the separating face.

43. (previously presented) A device according to claim 42, wherein the source generates UV radiation and wherein at least one of the two mould halves of the mould consists of UV-permeable material.

44. (previously presented) A device of claim 43, wherein the mask consists of a layer of material that is impermeable to UV radiation.

45. (currently amended) A device according to claim 40, wherein the mould is provided with spacers which hold the two mould halves a small distance apart from one another when the mould is in the closed position, so that at least a gap is formed that ~~preferably~~ surrounds the mould cavity and is in communication with that cavity, and wherein the mask is arranged in the region of the gap.

46. (original) A device according to claim 45, wherein the mould is provided with resilient means or displacement means that allow the two mould halves to move closer together following crosslinking shrinkage.

47. (previously presented) A device according to claim 40, wherein during filling of the mould cavity the mould is at least partially immersed in starting crosslinkable material that is at least partially still in the uncrosslinked state.

48. (previously presented) A device according to claim 47 which comprises a reservoir for supplying the starting crosslinkable material, which reservoir surrounds the mould cavity and can be connected to the mould cavity, and wherein during filling of the mould cavity the reservoir is connected to the mould cavity and floods that cavity.

49. (previously presented) A device according to claim 47, which comprises means for closing the mould while the mould is at least partially immersed in the starting crosslinkable material.

50. (previously presented) A device according to claim 47, wherein the mould comprises a container and a displaceable mould member, wherein the displaceable mould member can be moved away from and towards the container wall lying opposite it for the purpose of opening and closing the mould, and wherein there is provided in the container an inlet through which the starting crosslinkable material flows in between the container wall and the displaceable mould member as the mould is opened, and wherein there is provided in the container an outlet through which the starting crosslinkable material flows out again as the mould is closed.

51. (previously presented) A device according to claim 50, wherein one of the two mould halves is provided on the container wall and the other on the displaceable mould member.

52. (previously presented) A device according to claim 51, wherein the first mould half is a male mould half and the second mould half is a female mould half, and wherein the male mould half is provided on the container wall and the female mould half is provided on the displaceable mould member.

53. (previously presented) A device according to claim 50, wherein pumps are provided which, as the mould is opened, feed in the starting crosslinkable material through the inlet and between the container wall and the displaceable mould member and, as the mould is closed, convey it back through the outlet.

54. (original) A device according to claim 50, wherein means are provided for driving the displaceable mould member.

55. (original) A device according to claim 47, wherein means are provided for producing a flow that separates the moulding from the mould when the mould is opened and flushes the moulding out of the mould when the mould is closed.

56. (previously presented) A device according to claim 50, wherein means are provided for producing a flow that separates the moulding from the mould when the mould is opened and flushes the moulding out of the mould when the mould is closed, and wherein, in a first cycle, the starting crosslinkable material first of all flows in through the inlet and between the container wall and the displaceable mould member and then flows back out through the outlet, the source for the energy then acts upon the mould with an amount of energy necessary for it to be possible for forming the moulding to be released from the mould, and then, in a second cycle, the starting crosslinkable material flows in through the inlet and between the container wall and the displaceable mould member separates the moulding from the mould and then flushes it out through the outlet.

57. (original) A device according to claim 47, wherein a gripping device is provided which removes the crosslinked moulding from the mould.

58. (previously presented) A device according to claim 50, wherein a gripping device is provided which removes the crosslinked moulding from the mould, and wherein the container comprises, on a container wall other than the shape-giving face, a hollow or recess that extends substantially in the direction of movement of the displaceable mould member, the gripping device being arranged in that hollow or recess, and wherein the displaceable mould member comprises, on an outer wall that does not lie opposite the shape-giving container wall, an indentation in which the gripping device deposits the removed moulding.

59. (previously presented) A device according to claim 58, wherein the displaceable mould member comprises a channel that leads to the indentation and can be connected to a negative pressure or positive pressure source, which channel is connected to the negative pressure source

when the gripping device deposits the removed moulding in the indentation of the displaceable mould member and then is connected to the positive pressure source in order to release the lens.

60. (original) A device according to claim 51, wherein the mould is provided with spacers that hold the two mould halves a small distance apart from one another when the mould is in the closed position, so that an annular gap is formed that surrounds the mould cavity and is in communication with that cavity.

61. (original) A device according to claim 60, wherein the mould is provided with resilient means or displacement means that allow the two mould halves to move closer together following crosslinking shrinkage.

62. (canceled)

63. (previously presented) A process of claim 1, wherein said molding is an optical lens.

64. (previously presented) A process of claim 1, wherein said molding is a contact lens.

65. (previously presented) A process of claim 3, wherein the radiation energy is UV radiation.

66. (previously presented) A process of claim 3, wherein the radiation energy is gamma radiation.

67. (previously presented) A process of claim 3, wherein the radiation energy is electron radiation.

68. (previously presented) A process of claim 3, wherein the radiation energy is thermal radiation.

69. (currently amended) A process of claim 4, wherein ~~the masking is effected by a mask that is impermeable or of poor permeability to the crosslinking energy and wherein~~ the mask is provided on or in the mould but outside the mould cavity.

70. (previously presented) A process of claim 69, wherein the mould comprises different mould members and the mask is arranged in the region of separating planes or separating faces of different mould members.

71. (previously presented) A process of claim 70, wherein the mask is provided on the separating face of one of the mould members.

72. (previously presented) A process of claim 70, wherein the mask is arranged such that it is in contact with the starting crosslinkable material.

73. (currently amended) A process according to claim 71, wherein the mould is not fully closed after the introduction of the starting crosslinkable material into the mould cavity, so that at least a gap containing excess starting crosslinkable material remains open, the gap being in communication with the mould cavity, and wherein the crosslinking energy is restricted from the excess starting crosslinkable material disposed in the gap by ~~means of a~~ the mask.

74. (previously presented) A process of claim 73, wherein the mould is closed further following crosslinking shrinkage as crosslinkage of the material progresses.

75. (currently amended) A device of claim 40, wherein ~~the means for spatially restricting the impingement of the energy comprises a mask provided on the mould,~~ the mask is fixed at or on the mould being impermeable or of poor permeability to the energy causing the crosslinking.

76. (previously presented) A device of claim 43, wherein the UV-permeable material is quartz.

77. (previously presented) A device of claim 44, wherein the layer is a metal oxide layer.

78. (previously presented) A device of claim 77, wherein the layer is a chrome layer.

79. (currently amended) A process for the manufacture of a crosslinked moldings, comprising the steps of:

(a) introducing a starting crosslinkable material into a mold, wherein said mold ~~is at least partially impermeable to a crosslinking energy suitable to crosslink the starting crosslinkable material and~~ comprises a first mold half having a first molding surface, ~~and~~ a second mold half having a second molding surface, and at least one mask, wherein the first and second molding surfaces together define a mold cavity, wherein at least one of the first and second mould surfaces is permeable to a

crosslinking energy suitable to cause the crosslinking of the starting crosslinkable material, wherein the mask is associated with one of the first and second mould halves having an energy-permeable mould surface and is impermeable or at least of poor permeability compared with the permeability of the energy-permeable mould surface, wherein the mask extends inwardly right up to the mould cavity and surrounds the mould cavity so as to screen all areas behind the mask with the exception of the mould cavity;

(b) providing the crosslinking energy in a form of a substantially parallel beam; and

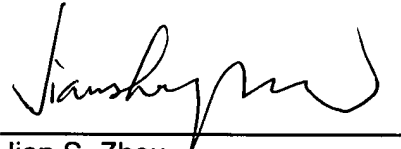
(c) irradiating with the energy the mould containing the starting material from the mould half having the mask associated therewith so as to spatially restricting the crosslinking energy to be impinged to the mold cavity in an energy-impinging region, wherein the energy-impinging region is defined by combination of the first and second mould surfaces and an imaginary wall extending between the first and second mould surfaces and surrounding the mould cavity, wherein the imaginary wall is formed by transferring the boundary contour with the mould cavity of the mask in a two-dimensionally parallel and downwards manner from one mould surface to the other mould surface
~~corresponding to a molding to be produced and having a non-adjustable peripheral boundary defined by the spatial restriction of the crossing energy impingement,~~ thereby causing essentially only the starting crosslinkable material ~~disposed in~~ located inside the energy-impinging region ~~of the mold cavity~~ to be crosslinked ~~all together~~ to a degree sufficient to form the molding capable of being released from said mold, wherein the produced molding comprises a first surface defined by the first molding surface, an opposite second surface defined by the second molding surface, and ~~an a~~ a clean and burr-free moulding rim which does not require any subsequent mechanical processing and at least partial areas of which are defined by the imaginary wall which is defined by the boundary contour of the mask with the mould cavity ~~non-adjustable peripheral boundary of the energy-impinging region defined by the spatial restriction of the energy impingement, and wherein the produced moulding is free from burrs or flashes.~~

80. (previously presented) A process of claim 79, wherein said molding is an ophthalmic lens.

81. (previously presented) A process of claim 80, wherein said ophthalmic lens is a contact lens.

Should the Examiner believe that a discussion with Applicants' representative would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned. Please address all correspondence to Robert Gorman, CIBA Vision, Patent Department, 11460 Johns Creek Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any other fees which may be required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 and 1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-2965.

Respectfully submitted,



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Feb. 13, 2004

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